Dale Evans

Oral History Interview
Dale Evans
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Interviewed by Jim King in Juneau, AK

Jim: Dale Evans was visiting in Juneau in May when I interviewed him. Dale had a long career with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. It is good to have you here Dale and contributing to this prestigious historical program.

Dale: I think it is a great move to get some of the early history of the Fish and Wildlife Service down on tapes and paper. I hate to think that we are the last of our breed and have to be referred to as "history" but I guess that is the case.

I have been fortunate in terms of timing to do the things that I lately discovered I always wanted to do. We had a high school class reunion 5-6 years ago in Bend, Oregon.

Looking at some old high school newspapers, I found that when I graduated my ambition was go to Alaska and have my own airplane. Ultimately, all those things came to pass.

Jim: I can't remember when I first met you but it seems like you were always part of the operation, going back to the 50's.

Dale: When I was going to school at Oregon State, the Fish and Game Department put a lot of emphasis on fish and gamer's getting some real life experience. The Department had established some good contacts with the Fish and Wildlife Service for sending us off to Alaska in the summer. That was when the stream guard program was in full swing. They put the green horns out in tents at the mouth of salmon streams and serviced them from a boat or an airplane. In my case, in 1953, I was at the mouth of Konk Creek on Etolin Island, south of Wrangell. I had one of those 13-foot fiberglas Comets. I would run the skiff into Wrangell and get my groceries every week or so, make my reports, etc.

I recall one evening I had taken the skiff and gone up the beach above Konk Creek, a mile or two. There was a neat little sandy slot between some big boulders where I could drag the skiff up and sit and listen for those gray-painted creek-robbing seiners to come down from Wrangell to try to steal my fish. Sure enough, I heard a boat coming and pretty soon, I could see it. It was in really tight to the beach without running lights. I could see the outline of the boat. I had a big 12-cell flashlight. I got down on the beach and just as he got opposite to me I shined the light into the pilothouse. It was Will Troyer in the *Harlequin*. He was coming down to see if anybody was stealing my fish. I nailed him and we had a cup of coffee. Then he went home and I went back to my tent.

Jim: Was Will the agent there in Wrangell at that time?

Dale: Yes, he was the assistant there, and he was in graduate school when I started at Oregon State. He had just gone to work in Wrangell the year before. I was pleased to see him again.

Jim: Do you have any more yarns about being a stream guard. That seemed to have been a "colorful" thing that sort of disappeared.

Dale: Looking at it now, no agency, or any company, would even think of sending an inexperienced teenager out to be by themselves. We had individuals scattered all over the Territory at that time. There were stories about guys that went out and had something happen to them, and, whether by accident or design, they never showed up again. These were not just college kids that were relatively inexperienced on how to take care of themselves, there were some old-timers that were hired as stream guards, some retired trollers, that disappeared. I am impressed with the fact that there was enough confidence expressed in us that we were allowed to go out alone. In my case, I missed the stream guard orientation class in Wrangell because the kid that was camped at Konk Creek had developed a little "panic attack" from being out there by himself and he was being evacuated. As soon as I hit town, they put me in a Widgeon and flew me to Konk Creek. Kenny Loken was the Fish and Wildlife pilot flying out of Wrangell at that time. About 20 years later, his sister, Mary Meek, was my secretary for awhile here in Juneau.

The following summer, in 1954, I was working out of Ketchikan and flew the Ketchikan district stream surveys with Mary's husband, Bob Meek. That

was just a couple of weeks before that unfortunate crash in a Goose when they were coming back from Sitka. Bob and a couple other people were killed in that accident.

Jim: The stream guards in those days got issued a rifle but no life preserver.

Dale: I didn't need a rifle because Etolin was a black bear island, but I did have a surplus "May West." That life jacket came equipped with a packet of fluorescence dye in case I wanted to keep the sharks away, should I have to use it, or be found out there in the middle of the straits.

Jim: Did you get any creek robbers showing up?

Dale: Yes, there were some that I suspected of improper intentions. A couple of times I went out in the skiff just to chat. I didn't go onboard. I thought, perhaps, one shouldn't get too social and I tried to maintain a business-like relationship. The fishermen knew students were always short of cash, and they might look at passing a few bills to a stream guard as a cost of doing business.

Jim: Then after being a stream guard, you went back to school?

Dale: Yes, and then I worked for Clay Scudder there in Ketchikan in 1954, on the *Auklet II,* servicing weir camps and stream guards. When I got out of school in 1955, there were no permanent jobs in Alaska, but I got my Civil Service appointment at the Fisheries Research Lab in Woods Hole, Mass. I

went out on some ground fish cruises on the *Albatross III* and then transferred to Portland, Maine. I went out on commercial trawlers that winter sampling their catch. That is when I really learned what a tough miserable life being a commercial fisherman could be in the North Atlantic.

I exchanged Christmas cards with Clay Scudder and I told him that I hoped to see him again and he wrote back and asked if I was serious, and if so, there was going to be an opening in the Bristol Bay District. So, in the spring of 1956, I came to Juneau because that was where the Bristol Bay District was headquartered. I met Mark Meyer and helped him get ready to go out to the Bay that spring. That is where I worked until statehood, with 1-1/2 years out for being in the Army. The draft board was in Bend, but they had followed me to Massachusetts to Maine to Juneau, and finally out to King Salmon. I told them it wasn't convenient for the government for me to leave then. The sockeye run was just starting in the Bay so my departure was postponed until August.

At statehood in 1960, the management responsibility for salmon was being transferred to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. A lot of people were transferring outside. I put staying in Alaska as my first choice.

I had met Gordy Watson a couple of times as he was passing through King Salmon. And that's when I first heard about River Basin Studies. It seemed like a pretty good deal for biologists to fly Fish and Wildlife Service airplanes to get out on the job. If you were working in the states, you would be driving a game commission pickup truck. I thought flying was a better way to get around.

So, I was picked up by River Basin Studies and came to Juneau. It was in late spring of 1960 when I went to Anchorage and met Mel Monson. We each took an old blue Air Force surplus pickup to drive down the highway to Juneau. We had the back ends full of surplus equipment that we were able to scrounge from the military surplus yards. I don't think the Service would have been able to get any of its work done in those days if we hadn't had some expert scroungers that could hit the military surplus yards and get us what we needed.

The Office of River Basin Studies was a well organized and well managed effort by the Service to carry out reconnaissance surveys, trying to get out in front of the inevitable development of Alaska. In southeast Alaska, we were doing pretty basic reconnaissance level surveys of what were deemed to be the most likely sites for hydropower development.

Jim: You had a name for that, didn't you?

Dale: SEAORBS, Southeast Alaska Office of River Basin Studies, and that was the name of the boat we operated. I think the most enjoyable parts of our work was flying with Al Kropf in the Grumman Goose. He was a real artist with that airplane. I know that coming out of some of those high lake camps with a wet tent and a couple of great big bags of wet gill nets, wet clothes, wet sleeping bags, a boat and motor, and our limnology equipment must have put us at gross weight. We sure got wet when we did that work.

Jim: So which places did you work on?

Dale: Swan Lake, near Thomas Bay was one. I just bought a little book titled "The Strangest Story Ever Told" where, over several years, prospectors got chased out of the bay by weird long-haired, sharp-toothed four-legged critters that have never been identified. Bob McVey and I occasionally in the evening, heard organ music from the head of Swan Lake while we were camped there. Strange place!

We worked at Sweetheart Lake, Dorothy and Indian Lakes, Annex Lake a few times, Grace Lake near Ketchikan and several others. We did some detailed work on Grace Lake because it seemed a likely development. We chartered a 185 on wheel-skis at Ketchikan and got wintertime temperature profiles to complete the season data and determine when and at what level the lake stratified. The Auke Bay Lab did some experiments with pink salmon eggs from the outlet stream and showed the eggs probably would not develop in the temperatures of the water that would be released by the project proposed at that time. We did do some pretty good work.

Jim: You would go in and camp on these lakes?

Dale: Bob McVey designed, and Jack Pasquan at the carpenter shop at the sub-port built, a really nice workboat for us. It broke up into six sections that would stack and fit in the Goose. It was a good safe, stable boat to set experimental gill nets from. We could take temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles. We put a recording fathometer on the boat and developed the bathemetry of the lake. Usually, the USGS had a stream gauge on the

outlet and we could calculate the flushing rate and do the basic limnology of the lake.

We would get dropped off and the Goose would come back a week or so later and haul us out of there. We would go back to town and change our skivvies and buy some more groceries. For two or three years, that was my entire summer. Bob McVey and I went out together a lot. We had a couple of crews working all summer doing that work.

Jim: Was Gordy Watson in charge in Juneau then?

Dale: No. Mel Monson was the supervisor in Southeast and Gordy worked out of Anchorage for the Interior and Western Alaska. When the Service reorganized into the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, it was difficult to decide where River Basin Studies responsibility should go. In the remainder of the country, River Basins went with Sport Fish and Wildlife, but because almost all of the projects on the horizon in Alaska were going to have a primary impact on salmon, and that was deemed the BCF responsibility, River Basin Studies was placed in BCF. At times, like the Rampart Project, the waterfowl effect was going to be a primary line of interest, but there wasn't much of a ripple in the way we collaborated. It really was a pretty seamless operation. Everybody had worked with everybody else before, and being this far away from the flagpole, whatever politics there were between the agencies weren't really felt in Alaska. For me, personally, I really enjoyed working with the wildlife aspects of that project.

Jim: We still sort of felt like one outfit, even though the administrators were a little different. The field workers were all the same bunch. They had been in the same outfit for a number of years. We use to go to Christmas parties together.

Dale: Those were always something to look forward to! I've talked to other people about the way agencies allocated resources. My brother worked for the Forest Service then, and I can recall the meticulous daily dairy that he had to keep so every hour of his day could be allocated to some project or another. We all kept field diaries but they were filled with observations on our fieldwork. Particularly early on, when the Office of Alaska Fisheries, for example, was headquartered in Seattle, people would go out to the field stations about as soon as the ice went out. They were there until the fish quit running or the birds migrated or whatever and you pretty much spent a 7-day a week.

One year out in King Salmon, I guess it was when I came back from the Army, they had moved a couple of small trailer houses up on the barge and George Kaydas and Elmer Copstead brought their families out that year to spend the summer. That really bugged me. I wasn't married. I didn't have any family responsibilities. I was accustomed to the routine that after supper in the mess, we went back to the office. We would tally the fish tickets for the day and we would finish getting our work done. Gee, those guys would just go home! They weren't working 15-hour days anymore and I thought that was just a hell of a note!

Jim: How was it working for or with Mel Monson in those days? I always remember him as really a dynamic person but I never really worked with him except on a few field trips that we made.

Dale: I think one of Mel's strong suits that I can appreciate, perhaps more now than then, was to philosophize about the alternative ways a project might go down. Working with him in Southeast, the projects were mostly on a small scale. Individually, many were not significant. If a project was going to be the only log dump in a bay in all of Southeast Alaska, it would not have measurable effects by any approach you might take. But when you looked at those initial plans for the Tongass, five pulp mills, cutting plans that covered the entire forest, and considered the economic benefits of minimizing road building and getting the logs into the water as quick as you could and moving them by barge or log raft, you could see the potential for a log raft storage area or a log dump in just about every protected bay.

You had to look at that as an end point and try to manage and minimize those intrusions on the inter-tidal zones as much as you could. Mel would lean back in his office chair and get his pipe out and spend a great deal of time tapping it and getting it filled and properly going. I think by then he had his thoughts in order and then we would enter into the discussion.

Jim: I had fun working down the hall from Mel in the late 60's. He was in the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. About once a month he would come steaming into the office and wanted to know what I was doing about this or that and we would talk about it. Sometimes I responded and did something. I had to laugh because my supervisor was in Portland. It was Lynn

Greenwalt and he had never been to Alaska. I was sending my reports to Patuxent and Portland, and though Patuxent was supervising me, Patuxent thought Portland was. My only direct supervisor was Mel Monson who would come down and jack me up every once in a while. Did you know that the park at Twin Lakes, between here and town, is named for Mel Monson?

Dale: Yes. We were Outside when that developed. That was a good example of somebody taking a project that was within the scope of the Service and the work we did, but the park was largely extra-curricular on the part of Mel and what he was doing.

Jim: Mel was on the city parks and recreation advisory committee. He had a foot in the door to get that going.

Dale: We took a walk recently out on one of these dredge-spoiled mounds in front of your house. I can remember when we were trying to figure out a way of stabilizing those and wondering if we might create a little bit of habitat out there. We had plots laid out. We tried various seed mixtures. We hired Joe Smith and his front loader to make a few passes, scraping the inter-tidal vegetation off and dumping it on one of those spoil mounds created from glacial silt. We ran roto tillers there and mixed that in. It was interesting to see when the spoil mounds re-vegetated whether it was stuff that was carried in on high tides and deposited there or material we had introduced. I read the books on waterfowl food habits, and I remember we ordered some Reed Canary grass.

Jim: I think there is still a small patch of Reed Canary grass out there on the flats still. Most of your plots turned into a good seedbed for spruce trees. There are little square clumps of spruce trees out there.

Dale: The interesting thing about Reed Canary grass is that when I got hooked up doing some volunteer work with the Deschutes Basin Watershed Council in Bend, Reed Canary grass is not looked on favorably now. It is a weed and that is the stuff we are supposed to pull when we go out on our weed control projects.

Jim: I don't think it has escaped yet here. Do you want to talk a little more about the Rampart project? That was a pretty traumatic thing in its day. It is largely forgotten now.

Dale: Probably the only comparable project since then would have been the trans-Alaska pipeline. It certainly stretched the resources of the Fish and Wildlife Service, both bureaus. We had to do things that none of us had been directly involved in before, and we drew on a lot of outside expertise to help us get started. The waterfowl banding that went on in the impoundment area, the fish tagging at Texas Creek, and then the tag recoveries that we did up in the tributary spawning streams to get both an estimate of run size and distribution and utilization were important and interesting projects. The reservoir was going to be 10,000 square miles, roughly ten percent larger than Lake Erie. We talked to people in the Weather Bureau and they scratched their heads and said, "Yes, that could very well change the climate of interior Alaska with that big body of water there."

We had no notion of what kind of a body of water it was going to be. I'm sure you have walked out there in the Yukon Flats, heading towards a pond and have seen the spruce trees begin to wobble and shake, because you had walked out on to a floating muskeg. There would have been tens of thousands of acres of that stuff that would have floated to the surface. The Corps of Engineers had no intentions of doing any clearing in the reservoir. That simply would not have been at all feasible. Whether the reservoir would have developed into a productive lake for commercial fisheries was discussed and debated. I don't recall if we ever reached agreement on that.

I can see on your wall a photograph of the big map of North America that shows the distribution of the birds that were banded in the impoundment area. They went to Northern New England and all the way down the coast, down into Mexico and throughout the Pacific Flyway. That is one of the benefits of undertaking a study like that, because although it was a very threatening project, it also developed a lot of good basic information and provided the impetus and the funding to do work that might not have ever been done without it.

Jim: I think that the distribution of the waterfowl got the attention of the states below and organizations like the International Association of Fish and Game Commissioners, which changes its name more rapidly than I can keep up with. They took a good stand against it and publicized the duck distribution. I can't help thinking that had a lot to do with support for the refuges under ANILCA when we got eight waterfowl refuges. Before that, people just didn't relate very strongly to what was going on in Alaska.

Dale: I'm sure that is right. A member of Congress could have been almost indifferent to what was going on way up in Alaska. Certainly tourism was not developed the way it is now, so they didn't have constituents coming back with concerns about fish and wildlife resources. But when the local duck hunting club rang his bell and said, "Hey, we just collected a couple dozen bands that were put on up at Ohtig Lake in the Yukon Flats," then he had a reason to get on one side of the fence or the other.

Jim: I remember you came and participated in some of those big duck drives that we had there even though you were supposed to be working on salmon.

Dale: I don't know how many biologists in the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, or later the National Marine Fisheries Service, can say that he banded a whole lot more ducks than he ever put tags on fish.

Jim: I think you were there for some of our really big drives.

Dale: We worked out of Fort Yukon and Ohtig Lake. That was where we had the big trap. We herded flightless ducks with floatplanes and boats, and caught close to 10,000 one year. I recall that a black bear was hanging around and harassing us, and when we arrived in the morning we would see where he had dug up a couple of ducks that had perished in the banding operation.

I remember Fred Wolstad being one of the first guys that got dropped off there one morning. That black bear was messing around the camp so Fred

grabbed the rubber suit that we used when we got into the trap to brail the birds. He swung the suit around his head and instead of scaring the bear away, the bear just grabbed it when it went by. They had that suit all stretched out. Fred was on one end and the bear was on the other. He knew if he let go, it would slap him in the face and it might make him mad. They danced around and Fred grabbed a hand ax and backed his way into one of the little collapsible boats that we had there. Instead of whacking the bear in the head with the ax, he used it to chop the tie up line and went scooting out backwards into the lake, and was floating out there without a paddle. That bear would not go away. Ray Tremblay put up a snare using parachute cord and caught the bear.

There were about five airplanes with fish and wildlife people there, but no bear guns. Tremblay finally shot it with a .38. We put the ribs over the smudge fire we had going to keep the mosquitoes away and had those for lunch, and then hauled the rest of it back into Fort Yukon and gave it to somebody there.

The salmon tag recovery activities were interesting. We used a really big Peterson disk tag on the fish caught at Texas Creek. Howard Sears was in charge of that field program. We built our fish wheels for tagging and then had another pair of wheels upstream for recovery, and we used an enhanced Peterson ratio on the tags and recoveries to get an estimate of numbers.

In the summer, we had gone up to the villages and the stores in the upper part of the Yukon watershed and dropped off tackle boxes with silver dollars to pay for each tag, and forms to fill out to record catch data. Chuck Evans

and I made a couple of trips up the Porcupine drainage and elsewhere collecting tags in the winter. Sometimes we had not left enough silver dollars so we had a debt to pay to the guy running the trading post. It was interesting to see those villages and fish camps in the wintertime.

Jim: Somewhere in that period you got going on your flying, didn't you?

Dale: Yes, and I had occasion to think about that just last summer. I was writing a newsletter for the Central Oregon Chapter of the Oregon Pilots Association and trying to think of something to fill the space, and I recalled my initial checkride with Theron Smith to start flying Fish and Wildlife Service airplanes. It was in a 180 on floats out of Anchorage. I don't know how it is now, but then the single engine airplanes on straight floats were nosed in to a concrete bulkhead behind the hangar on Lake Hood. There was room for 3-4 airplanes, and then along the side of the cove, it was just willows and brush. Jerry Lawhorn had his "Kee-Kee Bird" on floats tied in there.

Everything had gone well with the checkride and I was feeling very smug and pleased with myself. There was just a tiny bit of off shore breeze when we came back to tie up and I perfectly calculated when to pull the mixture control and Smitty said, "you want help tying up?" I said, "yea, step out there on the float, but stay behind the lift strut." He had done this a thousand times and I didn't see the need to be very instructive but I was very conscious of telling him to stay behind the lift strut while the engine was still ticking over.

I figured when I pulled the mixture control and the engine stopped, that he would walk up the float and secure the airplane. I had my head down in the cockpit, getting out of the harness and making sure all the switches were off and the fuel was off and grabbing the paper work. We had just come up and kissed the dock, and then that little breeze started carrying us backwards. I looked up and Smitty was still standing behind the lift strut. I hadn't told him to go up there and grab the rope on the bulkhead. We were going backwards. I looked over my shoulder and we were weathercocking a little and heading right for Jerry's airplane. There wasn't time to start the engine again so I just stepped out and jumped into the lake and grabbed the float. I stopped us, but the airplane weather-cocked a little more and the vertical stabilizer just touched the end of that great long pilot tube that Jerry had on the Kee-Kee Bird and bent it. I was so mad. I pushed us back up to the dock and Theron said, "You know, Dale, you are going to be carrying people that don't know diddily-squat about airplanes or what to do or how to be safe. You are going to have to tell them exactly what to do and when to do it." It was a good lesson. I wrote my little piece about that for the newsletter and titled it something like "The Embarrassment of Learning by Experience."

Jim: Did you get your license in Anchorage?

Dale: I started in Anchorage at Merrill Field and finished my dual with Horace Black at the Fairbanks Air Service on a 90-hp Cub. One of his exercises for a crosswind was to put one main gear wheel on the centerline of the runway and fly the length of the runway on one wheel, all 10,000 feet.

That's how I learned about cross winds. I got my float rating signed off on the Tanana River by Tommy Olson.

Jim: Then you flew for River Basins out of Fairbanks?

Dale: Yes, and also a little bit down in Juneau. I think you brought N-750 down a winter or two, and later we had one of the Beavers on amphibs. That is when I talked somebody into agreeing that we should cut a hole in the floor of the old hangar in Juneau so the Beaver could get in. I don't know if that turned out to be so smart or not, but it did get it under cover.

Jim: I thought that worked great. That was Robards that engineered that. He was good at that sort of thing. He dug the floor out so that the Beaver would go in except for the tail. You had to lift the front wheels to get the tail in. He had it arranged so just at the right moment the front wheels would go up on a little ramp and the tail would come down and go into a hole. That lasted for a long time.

Dale: I guess it was after I retired and was spending quite a bit of time at the airport with the Civil Air Patrol that I heard the city wanted to tear that old hangar down. We tried to lobby the Borough to make it a national historic building or something. We figured that was the oldest building remaining in Alaska that had been in continuous use as an airplane hangar. It was originally Pan Am's.

Jim: Pan Am had built it then the military confiscated it during WWII. It stayed with the government after that. Now it is gone.

Dale: My first trip at night in a single-engine aircraft was with Chuck Evans going from Fairbanks to Dawson City. It was a beautiful moonlit night. You could see everything. We had planned to land on the river in front of Dawson, but as we got closer, we got to thinking that they still cut blocks of river ice there to store to keep things cool in the summer. The possibility of

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those holes in the ice, or perhaps big blocks of ice frozen onto the surface, made us decide landing out there at nighttime wasn't such a good idea. So we called Canadian Flight Service at Whitehorse and told them we thought we would land out at the airstrip instead. We made a pass there and the moon was down behind a ridge and the whole area there was in a deep dark shadow. We couldn't even be sure we were finding the airstrip. We didn't have anyone in Dawson that we could talk to, so we called Whitehorse again and asked them if they would get on the telephone and call somebody in Dawson to arrange for some lights at the airstrip. We were going to need a ride into town anyway, and sure enough, a little later, we saw vehicles heading out the road. They lined up on the ends of the runway and we landed between the lights. I often think about the impossibility of accomplishing something like that nowadays. You just wouldn't get much of a response. That sort of thing was pretty common place in those days.

Jim: You flew out of Fairbanks for a few years and then did you come back down here?

Dale: I went back to graduate school in 1964-65. After that I transferred back to Juneau. I wasn't really doing enough fieldwork to stay very current, so my next door neighbor and I bought a Lake amphibian. I thought maybe between flying for fun and flying for work I could get enough time to stay current.

Jim: Before that, I remember, back to banding, you came out and joined up in a big Brant drive on the Kashunuk River west of Bethel.

Dale: I was doing something up on the Flats then. Hank Hansen came through Fort Yukon and I caught a ride with him to go out there. I had a project that I wanted to look at up by Teller. We did that and then joined you and others on the Brant drive.

During part of the year I worked with Cal Lensink on the waterfowl production studies out of Fort Yukon. That is when I learned to paddle a rat canoe. It took me more than one experience to become proficient with that.

The first time I got in one, Fort Yukon was having its annual flood and water was in the street right outside the old Game Commission cabin. I crawled into one of those and all the little Indian kids were standing around giggling because they knew what would likely happen. If the water had been more than 6-8 inches deep, I probably would have tipped it over. Those little canoes were very "tippy."

One evening Cal and I walked out past Hospital Lake. There were some ponds out there and we wanted to see what kind of ducks had shown up. We saw a critter, at the same time – had a good look at it. We knew it was a mustelid of some kind because of the way it was running and acting, but because of the size of the animal, etc., we said, that's got to be a Fisher. That was the only thing that would fit. We both knew Fort Yukon was way out of Fisher range, but I would like to ask Cal if he has thought any more about that.

That was a nice trip out to the Seward Peninsula and the Delta for the Brant drive. It was the first time that I had gotten out to that part of the country. Three or four years ago, Ginny and I flew the Maule out as far as Nome, and came back through Bethel and Anchorage.

Jim: The villages keep growing out there. They metamorphosed some and they keep getting bigger. I remember when we were out there in the early 60's, they were just starting to get outhouses in all those villages. Of course, during a couple of years flying over looking at the villages, these outhouses sticking up all over the place were the most prominent feature. Now all of those outhouses are gone. They are putting in inside plumbing in all those houses.

Dale: A dominant feature of going around Bethel now is to see those great big pipes with all the utilities in them standing up above the ground.

Jim: Sometime in that period you and Chuck Evans rescued some people at Minto Lake. That was a really good story.

Dale: Yes, we were flying, heading for Fairbanks. Down there in Minto Flats, just right out in the middle of that great big green expanse was a Pacer, squatting down in the willows. We were able to land on the water within hiking distance of it. There were a couple of people there and we checked to see that everybody was o.k. They thought a relative might come looking for them in a riverboat. No one was hurt. We found out who they were. We called Flight Service and reported this airplane. Chuck was flying and I was on the radio. Both of our names got in there. The pilot of Cessna 727 was Chuck Evans, my name is Dale Evans, and David Evans was down on the ground and somebody else named Evans was coming to get him. I think Flight Service, about that time, was unable to keep track of which Evans they were dealing with and whose flight plan they were supposed to cancel.

Jim: Do you have any impressions from being around Clarence Rhode from that period?

Dale: I never really got well acquainted with him. I recall that when I was working out at King Salmon, we had these hundred or so temporaries scattered out doing various things. We had radio checks with them in the morning at 8:00 and in the evening at 8:00. A guy named Jim Stanton had brought a guitar up with him, and was going to learn how to play during the summer. At the end of an evening schedule on the Fish and Wildlife frequency, he gave a little recital to let everybody hear what his progress was. Clarence was flying a Twin Beach someplace up in the Brooks Range. I think he was trying to get his own position reported in, but he was getting pretty impatient by the time we had run this great long schedule, and then to

hear somebody start playing the guitar was just a little bit more than he could stand. He introduced us to some radio protocols that we hadn't been following too closely.

The summer that he was lost, the Goose and Copstead left King Salmon and joined in on that search.

Jim: After all those years, you went outside to work on the Columbia for awhile.

Dale: After the Reorganization Act #4, 1970, when NOAA was created and BCF went over there, that was a major breaking up of responsibilities again. River Basin Studies stayed in Fish and Wildlife Service. The new National Marine Fisheries Service set up an office of Water Resource Studies in Juneau. I think I was the only person active in River Basin Studies that stayed, so I helped NMFS get that program set up here in Alaska and nationally. I had my obligatory tour in Washington, D.C. for about three years.

Then I went out to Portland to be Director of the Environmental and Technical Services Division, which included the Columbia River Fisheries Development Program. Everybody told me that was the best job in National Marine Fisheries Service. I spent 10 years there on the Columbia River program and doing the NMFS equivalent of River Basin Studies for the Northwest Region. After 10 years, I felt that I had certainly done enough of that. I had always been on the production side of the fish and wildlife equation, habitat work. There was an opening in Seattle in Fisheries

Management, the off shore Fisheries/Magnuson Act work. I thought that I really ought to do that because except for the time I spent out in Bristol Bay when Alaska was a Territory on sockeye management, I hadn't been in harvest management.

The fellow who was chief of fisheries in Juneau was also applying for this opening in Seattle. I said, "Let's not fight, I would much rather go back to Juneau than to go to Seattle." That is how I ended up back in Juneau the last 6-7 years before I retired.

Jim: Were you doing River Basin work those last years?

Dale: No, just working on the off shore ground fish fisheries in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska. I really had come full circle by then, because my first year after I got out of school, I was working with the North Atlantic Ground Fish Fisheries and going out on the commercial trawlers and sampling the catch. We were just starting to put observers out in the domestic fishery, similar to the program in the foreign fisheries in the early days. That was a pretty dynamic time. In those 6-7 years, we transitioned from a mostly foreign fishery within our 200-mile zone, to joint venture fisheries, where American fishermen delivered their catches at sea to foreign processors, to what became grossly over-capitalized domestic fisheries. That all happened in a very short period of time.

Jim: You certainly had an interesting circuit of various jobs. I remember thinking that the one thing that you missed in all that was your airplane. After you retired, I guess you got back into the flying game.

Dale: I bought a Maule up in Fairbanks. It was on wheels, and in December, during the last North Pacific Council Meeting that I attended in Anchorage, I located a pair of floats. I stayed over the weekend and disassembled them and had them trucked down to Juneau. Putting them on the airplane was my first big project after I retired.

Jim: Have we missed anything?

Dale: Maybe the pipeline. That was another time that the Fish and Wildlife responsibilities overlapped and the agencies worked closely together. I can remember taking a Beaver from Valdez with Jim Bartonek and Dave Klein. We flew the pipeline route as far as Atigun Pass, and we couldn't break through on the north side to go on down to Prudhoe Bay. That was the first habitat description of the pipeline route. They were taking pictures and taking notes. It had been surveyed so we were looking for survey markers of some kind or another leaving Valdez, and then when we got to Fairbanks the haul road they had bladed out in the wintertime pretty well defined the route. We spent several days doing that and it was really interesting to get that first look at where it was going to happen.

That was just before I went back to Washington. I coordinated assembling the Environmental Impact Statement for the marine terminal and marine tanker leg on down to the West Coast. I think BLM put the overland portion together for the Interior Department with the Fish and Wildlife Service staff. That was a major project. I remember our conclusion in the EIS about tanker traffic. We said it was not a question of if there would be a

super tanker disaster, the only question was when will a major disaster occur with a super tanker.

Jim: The question now is "when the next one will be."

Dale: I didn't follow that really closely, but I think the Coast Guard will now continue to maintain some kind of monitoring of the traffic moving in and out of the Sound. I think that after a few years of uneventful traffic, radar coverage just kind of fizzled out.

Jim: They assured us there was no chance for those ships to go astray. That never really came out in the investigations of the accident. It always seemed to me like the Coast Guard should share a good deal of the blame for that. They tried to lay it all on the skipper.

Dale: Well, he was asleep in his cabin. The way I recall the plan, it would be just the way air traffic control now is going to keep track of aircraft on the taxiways-runways. That is how they were going to monitor the tanker traffic in and out of the Sound. It was all going to be on a radar screen and they were going to watch them and see that they stayed in the tanker lanes.

Jim: Another thing that I remember when you were in Juneau one time, is when they were getting ready to lease off shore lands in Bristol Bay. You and I got to talking about it, and it was when Jay Hammond was Governor. We went up to see him and expressed a good deal of concern about the fish and the birds in Bristol Bay. He was very attentive. I think he ultimately did something to get those leases cancelled. I remember after you and I

talked to him for awhile, we were getting ready to leave and he said, "Come up again if you have any concerns like that, you have a standing invitation, and when you come up to see me you are coming by invitation and not coming as qualified lobbyists." We had a nice talk with him and I think that he did get very concerned about Bristol Bay. He was as equally familiar or more so than we were but perhaps getting his attention was helpful.

Dale: I think those leases out there were ultimately repurchased and just taken out of the list of possibles.

Jim: Yes, ultimately there was pretty strong action. I think Jay got credit for that.

Dale: Deservedly so, it is not often in any level of administration that you would get a person into the Governor's chair with the kind of background that he had. He was/is a good citizen. My first meeting with Jay was when he had a back problem. When I was working out in King Salmon, it went out on him and he was on the floor of his house there in Naknek. We took a pickup and a sheet of plywood down and slid him on it and hauled him back up to King Salmon and slid him into the door of a DC-3, and that is the way he went to Anchorage.

Jim: I think we got a nice story here for Mary Smith to work on.

Dale: This is nice reminiscing. I wish I had been in the audience when that group of people you described there in Anchorage talked about the early days of the Aircraft Division. I think I was really fortunate to have had so

many hours in the right seat flying around with the cream of the bush pilot crop. I know that I learned things about the care and feeding of airplanes that no one ever gets in ground school. That has really been important, and I think it has helped me continue to enjoy using an airplane for camping. My cause locally now is to get a fly-in campground built on the Bend Airport. We make a lot of use out of them where we can find them.

The other thing that I think I appreciate was learning to be comfortable flying down around the treetops. After I retired here in Juneau, I had Jack Hodges come and show some slides to the Civil Air Patrol and talk about the waterfowl surveys and how many hours you guys would fly at 500 feet or below. Everything you read about aircraft safety says you have to keep flying the airplane until it stops flying of its own accord. You don't just cover your eyes when you are a couple of hundred feet above the ground. I know so many of those people that I fly with Outside now are so very uncomfortable when they get below 1,000 feet. They think when they get down to pattern altitude it's all over with.

Jim: There was something about the system that Smith set up in the way he coached us younger fellows. The thing that you were talking about there where we sort of served an apprenticeship in the right seat, lots of us. The safety record was really remarkable for the people like you and I who came on board the system. We were full time biologists or enforcement agents or something else. None of those guys ever had a fatal accident. They bent some airplanes.

Dale: I was thinking of the accident record that the Fish and Wildlife Service had established with pilot/biologists when Theron was running the Aircraft Division, and the accident record that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game established when they began doing the same kinds of tasks that the Service had been carrying out. They lost quite a few pilots and they broke up a whole lot of airplanes during the first few years as they were getting started with their own aircraft activities. I just don't know how the work could have been done in the Territorial days if we hadn't had a successful Aircraft Division.

One of the things that I remember Smitty asking me was when I was doing the oral part of my check ride was just about my interest in aviation. He asked me if I belonged to AOPA, and which flying magazines did I subscribe to. One of the drawbacks being a pilot/biologist and not a full time pilot, naturally was staying current. He just wanted to find out if I maintained my interest in flying during the off season, and was I doing a little bit of home studying and self-educating through flying magazines, etc.

Jim: That is one of the aspects of the flying business that the non-flying administrators don't really have any concept of, and that is the technical side that you have to keep up with. Smitty gave us a lot of pointers and help with that. We all had to keep up with the latest on aircraft and also had to keep up with our wildlife and fisheries literature and that sort of thing. We had the Department administrative regulations of one sort or another and then on top of that we had all the FAA rules and changes. Changes in how we managed airplanes, but Smitty, somehow, without being heavy handed about it, kept us pointed in the right direction.

Dale: I came across a big 3-ring binder when I was unpacking my stuff from the office. It was full of Advisory Circulars and other FAA periodic releases. I must have gotten on that mailing list somehow for some good purpose.

Jim: It has been a good session, Dale. Anything else you want to bring up?

Dale: I think something missing from the literature, at least I haven't come across it, and that is a discussion on the use of aircraft as a tool for our lake surveys that we did here in Southeast when we didn't go in and set up a camp. We used the Goose. We set gill nets out of the bow compartment, anchored the net on shore and let the wind string it out backwards from the Goose. We designed our limnology kits so we could open the cargo door on the right side and work from the airplane. We taxied back and forth across the lake and we did our depth sounding and got the lake profiles established that way.

If the weather was calm and there was no wind we could get vertical temperature profiles and draw water samples from various depths. If there was a pretty good wind blowing then we would start up an engine and try and maintain position. That was kind of chancy, but nonetheless, we could watch the slope on the wire. We had a trailing antennae reel with steel trolling wire clamped on the side of the airplane that we used to lower the water sample bottles and the temperature probes.

I think it epitomized the way aircraft were applied to getting the job done. It took pilots who were really interested in the kind of work we were doing, and those were the guys that had been with the Service for quite a while. Their interest wasn't just in driving an airplane but they got involved with the projects too.

Jim: Thanks a lot Dale. I think this was a good record of some things that probably weren't well represented in the oral history.

Dale: It defines the good old days as far as I am concerned!

--end of interview—side 2—

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